

**BOARD OF FINANCE
MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING
March 20, 2010**

Saturday, March 20, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. at the Senior Center, Mona Terrace, Fairfield, Ct 06824

Members of the Board of Finance present were Chairman Flynn, Mr. Bellitto Jr., Mr. Brachfeld, Mr. Brown, Mr. Kiley, Mr. Stone, Mr. Tetreau.

Member of the Board of Selectmen present was Kenneth Flatto.

Also present was Paul Hiller, Chief Fiscal Officer and Clerk of the Board of Finance and Linda Gardiner, Budget Director, Town of Fairfield.

Chairman Flynn called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

AGENDA

Mr. Flynn welcomed everyone to this special open public forum and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Mr. Flynn explained that the main charge for the BOF is to approve Town spending and appropriations across Town. Mr. Flynn also explained that the BOF has the ability to adjust the budget on a line item basis with the Town side of the budget only. The BOE budget can only be approved or rejected based on the total dollar amount with no line item adjustments. The BOE makes its own decisions on the line items.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Gary Gulemi, 221 Lindamir Lane, Fairfield, President Fairfield Girls Softball Little League
He stated that he came to this event last year with the girls to address the issue of building a public field on the Hoyden's Lane parcel of land but funding would be needed. He reported that the girls need a designated home field that is comparable to the one the boys league currently have for their games. He reported that his organization has set aside \$50K to put towards finishing off the field if the Town would build the field. He noted that there were 350 girls registered last year to play softball. He urged the BOF to allow the financing for this project to move forward.

Doreen Herron, President-elect, Sherman School PTA

She asked the BOF to support the BOE budget as presented. She noted that technology and maintenance need to be funded. She also noted that class size is important and smaller classes do make a difference.

Betty Ann Shaunessey, 102 Queen's Grant Road, Fairfield

She noted that at the high school level, class sizes are large now.

Eric Newman, 85 Eastfield Drive, Fairfield, PTA Council

He asked the BOF to support the girl's softball field request for funding.

Board of Finance
Minutes of Special Meeting
January 28, 2008

Ann Stamler, 411 Stratfield Road, RTM District 5

She thanked the BOF for their work on the budget and she asked them to continue to act in the best interests of the Town. She noted that the Fairfield Woods Middle School project has a cost estimate of \$1.2M and she has received 6 emails from constituents asking her to support that project because it is for the children. She said that she knows this Board considers all aspects of the town when making their decisions and she suggested that some of the infrastructure projects could be bonded for a shorter length of time which would cost the Town less in interest, thereby possibly saving enough to possibly fund the girl's softball field.

Maureen Sawyer, 43 Thor Place, Fairfield, Riverfield School

She asked the Board to support the BOE budget as presented. She also noted that our children provide the best rate of return ever.

Albert Vosburgh, 42 Puritan Road, Fairfield

He reported that 23% of the population in Fairfield are senior citizens. He also reported that there are 29 courses being offered at the Senior Center for life long learning and he requested that the Senior Center not be overlooked in the budget process. He stated that there is only one full time employee with all the other employees being part time. He reported that the Program Director position that is part-time has been vacant for 6 months. He reported that the restroom facilities are almost deplorable, especially the women's rooms. He noted that they were built for children and they need to be updated so older adults can use them safely.

Kenneth Flatto, First Selectman

He thanked the Board for creating this forum for public comment. He said that getting accurate information is important when making budgeting decisions. Mr. Flatto also reported that staffing increases have an effect on health insurance costs and he explained his rationale for decreasing the BOE budget request. Mr. Flatto said that every \$1M increase in the budget will result in a 1% increase in the tax burden to the residents of Fairfield

Elaine Davis, 206 Farmington Avenue, Fairfield

She said there are 294 students entering 6th grade at Tomlinson Middle School next year and who will teach them without adequate staffing?

Robin Orriss, 53 Nutmeg Lane, Fairfield

She said that larger classes are not good.

Mary Hogue, 165 Stonewall Lane, Fairfield, President-Elect, PTA Council

She said that she was pleased to see that the BOF focused on town-wide issues without partisanship.

Linda Pryor, 893 South Pine Creek Road, Fairfield, President SEPTA

She asked the BOF to support the BOE budget as presented.

Peter Ambrose, RTM

He thanked the BOF for their tireless work on the budget and all year long. He expressed his concern with contract negotiations and he suggested that a specialized counsel be used to handle negotiations. He also noted that retirement benefits need to be addressed. Mr. Bellitto Jr. reported that Donald Houston, a lawyer who specializes in labor issues, will assist the Town Attorney this year with all contracts in negotiations including fire, police and BOE.

Board of Finance
Minutes of Special Meeting
January 28, 2008

Mr. Bellitto said that this budget balancing act is very difficult every year but the Town has elected 9 very smart people to serve on the Board of Finance and we will do the very best we can for Fairfield.

Mr. Tetreau stated that feedback is very important to the BOF. He also said that this year's budget is very challenging and next year's budget will probably be as challenging but balance is the key.

Mr. Stone thanked Chairman Flynn for his leadership as Chairman and he also thanked the public for coming out to this session on a Saturday morning.

Mr. Kiley thanked the public for their time and effort in this process and he reminded them that their input is invaluable to the entire budget process.

Mr. Brachfeld thanked Mr. Flynn for his leadership and he stated that this board is totally bi-partisan, fair and open.

Mr. Brown said he appreciates the opportunity to serve on this board and he reminded everyone that their feedback is essential. He thanked everyone for participating in this process.

Mr. Flynn said that the budget process is a balancing act and diversity is important in an effort such as this. He said that outside influences on the budget are state and federal monies that get smaller and smaller causing local governments to do more even with a flat increase in the budget. He also noted that the Madoff issue didn't help things any and the Town is dealing with a \$3.8M increase this year as well as newly mandated requirements for retiree benefits planning.

Mr. Flynn also told the audience that the diversity in Fairfield was one of the major reasons he and his family decided to settle here and he is very glad that they made this choice.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

